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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000290

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, AF S/E WILLIAMSON
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR, AND ALSO PASS USAID

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SENSITIVE

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y GARBLED TEXT, MISSING PARA 3

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SUBJECT: Minawi to S/E Williamson: Weak and Isolated, SLM Still Striving to Transform Itself

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: While the lack of DPA implementation has left the SLM weak and isolated, it continues to strive toward transforming the movement from a fighting force to a political party, Senior Assistant to the President and SLM leader Minni Minawi told S/E Williamson in Khartoum. He suggested that DPA implementation focus on increasing security for civilians and enhancing the ability of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) to deliver services to the population. UNAMID and the UN/AU mediation have neglected the SLM and, rather than utilizing its understanding of the local political dynamics in Darfur, have pursued a strategy that has further splintered the rebel groups, according to Minawi. END SUMMARY.

All Alone with Nothing To Do

¶2. (SBU) The lack of implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) has left the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) isolated in Khartoum "with nothing to do," Senior Assistant to the President and SLM Chairman Minni Minawi told S/E Williamson on February 26. Despite their weakened position, Minawi said the SLM leadership is trying to "civilize the fighters" and transform the movement from a "military mentality" to a political body, and he requested broader support from the international community for this effort. Increasing security for civilians and enhancing the ability of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) to deliver services remain the movement's top priorities, according to Minawi. He contended that much of the current violence in Darfur stems from inter-ethnic conflict and greed rather than Government versus rebel confrontations and that there is no political will to address this instability because Khartoum prefers to exclude Darfur from the 2009 elections.

DPA: "Expensive"

¶3. (SBU) One of Minawi's senior aids, Mohammed El Tijani, asserted that while 45 percent of the DPA is implemented, the core issues remain unresolved: peace and security, education, power-sharing, and wealth-sharing. While expressing gratitude for the USG-funded political party training program through the International Republican Institute (IRI), El Tijani urged the U.S. to play a larger role in DPA implementation to help the SLM "shift from war to building peace." The leader of the SLM caucus in the National Assembly, Ali Traio, said that implementation of the DPA would

restore credibility to the now-marginalized SLM. "The DPA has been expensive," he said, "and has cost us our fighters and our popular support."

UNAMID, JMST Neglect SLM

¶ 14. (SBU) Responding to a question from S/E Williamson, Minawi said that the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) had failed to engage and consult with the SLM, despite the fact that the DPA forms the basis of UNAMID's mandate. He said that the SLM has initiated all previous meetings with Joint Special Representative Rudolphe Adada and Force Commander Martin Luther Agwai and that he has not spoken to either of them in over one month. "We know Adada, but we don't even know who the key figures are in UNAMID," lamented Minawi, explaining that there is no working-level coordination between UNAMID and the SLM. El Tijani said that Adada "is not even aware of c6Q establish an "implementation team" within UNAMID.

¶ 15. (SBU) Minawi also characterized the UN/AU Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) as aloof and said that it has not utilized the SLM's understanding of the dynamics in Darfur to advance the political track. El Tijani reported that the JMST never responded to a letter from the SLM stating its position on the peace talks held in Libya in November 2007. Minawi argued that limited implementation of the DPA and the JMST's approach has encouraged rather than mitigated fragmentation of the rebel movements and predicted that the UN/AU will confront myriad challenges in producing a peace agreement among the 27 rebel factions now active in Darfur.

¶ 16. (SBU) "All they've done is hold meetings without substance," added El Tijani. Traio said that the UN/AU has put the SLM in the position of being an obstacle to peace even though it continues to strive for an end to the conflict. The UN/AU should promote the DPA as the underlying solution to the conflict and adjust the agreement to accommodate the concerns of the non-signatories, concluded Minawi.

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¶ 17. (SBU) S/E Williamson asked if the SLM had official representation in New York to facilitate consultation with the UN. El Tijani responded that the SLM requested some level of diplomatic representation at selected Sudanese missions but never received a response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Presidency. "If we were a full member of the Government, it would happen," he said.

¶ 18. (U) S/E Williamson did not have an opportunity to clear this message.

FERNANDEZ